Ensuring Your Live Exhibit Gets Enough Traffic and Discussing Visitor Safety in Your Pre-Show Marketing
By Jefferson Davis, Competitive Edge

I’m sure you’ll agree, it feels like forever since we’ve exhibited at a live tradeshow!

With vaccines now available to every age group in America, more and more people are getting vaccinated every day. With cautious optimism, we are all getting excited about the grand reopening of live tradeshows.

It’s important to understand that things are going to look and feel differently for a while.

It’s equally important to understand that overall event attendance may be down anywhere from 20% to 40% or more. And it’s possible that some attendees will visit fewer numbers of booths than they have in the past due to lingering health and safety concerns.

But please, do not let this discourage you! You absolutely can win the exhibiting game, even if overall event attendance is down a little.

I say this because one of the most important factors influencing your tradeshows success is your ability to attract enough of the right people to your exhibit and functions.

While overall event attendance is always an important issue, every exhibitor needs to understand that it really doesn’t matter if a show has 5,000, 15,000 or 50,000 attendees.

Seriously, that is NOT the most important number exhibitors should focus on, because I doubt your exhibit could handle any one of those large number of attendees.

So the question you may be asking is…

“What can I do to ensure that my exhibit gets enough traffic to make it worth the time and money to exhibit?”

Here are 7 ideas that can help you proactively answer this important question:

1. **Focus on QUALITY over QUANTITY**: As I mentioned, you don’t need thousands of visitors to make the show worthwhile. Honestly, for most exhibitors if you are able to attract 50 or 100 or 200 of the right visitors, you will have a very productive and valuable exhibiting experience.

2. **Zero in on your HIGHEST VALUE Visitors**: Take a look at your house lists and ask yourself “which of our customers and prospects in our sales pipeline would be most valuable to attract our exhibit?” Then, analyze the show audience and try to define who are the 50-100 attendees who represent the most value for you.

3. **Design a SAFE Exhibit Experience**: Be sure to stay up to date on the latest health and safety mandates from the show organizer, the convention center, and the city you are exhibiting at.
Make sure to design your exhibit with more open space, fewer booth staff, applying social distancing behaviors, touch free interactions, and sanitation protocols.

4. **Give Attendees a COMPELLING REASON to Visit Your Booth**: Develop a crystal-clear value proposition that speaks directly to the needs, pain points, projects, and opportunities your customers are experiencing and wanting. Tell them specifically how attending the show and visiting your exhibit will help them solve their problems and seize valuable opportunities. Everyone is interested in learning, solving problems, reducing costs, improving results and getting more value. Tell them specifically how you can help and they will come.

5. **Clearly Communicate Your HEALTH and SAFETY Protocols**: Be sure to tell them in your communications that your company is doing everything possible to ensure they have a safe experience in your booth.

6. **Use as MANY MARKETING MEDIA as you have the time, skill set, and budget to manage.** Remember, different people pay attention to and respond to different marketing channels. Also, there is tremendous power in repetition and multiple touch points. Use email, social media, landing pages, your website, the show’s website, along with digital and print advertising and sponsorship programs offered by your show producer.

Because of the clutter in the digital world, it’s also a really smart time to get back to using direct mail, where the competition is very light.

7. **Try to secure as many verbal COMMITMENTS or confirmed APPOINTMENTS as possible… before the show opens.** In your communications, ask recipients if they plan on visiting your booth during the show. If they say yes, consider using an appointment scheduling tool like Calendly to try to lock down a day and time. The more verbal commitments and appointments you can set before the show is open, the greater your chances of success.

Finally, be sure to keep top of mind that the ultimate value of your well-designed and well-executed pre-show marketing efforts does not only mean that visitors show up at your booth. It also takes into account the important brand impressions you make and the compelling messaging you deliver to help put your company’s products and services into their minds and keep them top of the mind, so you are there when they need what you offer.

Do these things, and you will not only win at tradeshows in the wake of the pandemic, but you will be positioned to win at every tradeshow you do going forward.

**Jefferson Davis, President of Competitive Edge** is North America’s leading exhibiting productivity expert. Since 1991, his results-focused, process-based approach to addressing critical exhibiting success factors has helped clients generate over $800 million in combined exhibiting results. Jefferson provides highly-intensive exhibit consulting and training services guaranteed to deliver results.

For a no-obligation discovery meeting, [schedule a 30 minute meeting here.](#)